

W5YI

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable.

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August 1, 1999

Amateur Service Switch to Universal Licensing System Postponed 2 Weeks!

The illustrious FCC Form 610 Amateur Radio application form is about to fade into ham radio history. That is, if everything goes according to schedule. The new date for conversion of the current Amateur Service database and folding into the FCC's new Universal Licensing System (ULS) is now August 16th. Originally it was to have been August 2.

The objective of ULS is for all radio services to file electronically into one massive database which will contain all radio services – instead of into eleven separate ones. ULS also reduces the number of application forms from forty to just five. The new forms are FCC Forms 601, 602, 603, 604 and 605. The Amateur Service will use the new *FCC Form 605* and its accompanying *Schedule "D"*.

The FCC Form 605 is a general purpose form comprising a main form and several schedules for collecting information in five different radio services. Its lengthy title is the *"Quick Form Application in the Ship, Aircraft, Amateur, Restricted and Commercial Operator, and the General Mobile Radio Services"*. The main form is to obtain information sufficient to identify the applicant and establish their basic eligibility. *Schedule "D"* is for additional data for the Amateur Radio Service. And there are nine pages of instructions – much of which does not apply to the Amateur Service.

The FCC's version of the Form 605 is confusing at best to radioamateurs since it uses 2-letter *Application Purpose* codes and asks questions

which are completely different from the current system. For example, you enter the letters "AU" (which stands for *Administrative Update* when you merely change your mailing address, phone number, fax number or e-mail address. Amateurs upgrading their licenses enter an "MD" for *Modification* of your license.

There are also blanks to request *"Special Temporary Authorizations, Amendments or Withdrawal of pending applications, Requests for Waiver* which are not used in the Amateur Service. A *Request for Waiver* is NOT the same as requesting a high speed code exemption available to applicants who obtain a *"Physician's Certification of Disability."* You use *Schedule "D"* to request a 13 and 20 wpm code exam exemption.

The new ULS system uses the *Taxpayers Identification Number* (TIN) – in the case of an Amateur, their 9-digit Social Security number (SSN) – as the "key" (or "unique identifier") with which to identify the record. The current Amateur database uses the applicant's call sign as the "unique identifier."

For the first time, applicants for new, upgraded or renewed Amateur Radio operator/station licenses will be asked to provide their Social Security number (SSN) to the FCC. This is being required by the Congress as part of the *Debt Collection Act of 1996*.

But even the FCC Form 605 and its *Schedule "D"* is not enough to handle all of the collection needs of the Amateur Service. Neither of these two forms, for example, contain places where volunteer

examiners can enter such needed information as the applicant's license class, examinations passed, or blanks where Volunteer Examiners can certify that they have complied with the *Administering VE* requirements. The current FCC Form 610 provides for collecting this information.

We pointed this out in our comments filed this Spring on the ULS *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, WT 98-20 released by the Managing Director's office on March 18, 1998. We said (QUOTED):

"This may or may not be an oversight since this information may not needed to be included in the new ULS licensee database. Although not stated, it may be the intention of the Commission to have these items appear on forms which are produced locally by the ...examining community. There is a precedent for doing just that. For example, the FCC Rules require that ...*Certificates of Successful Completion of Examinations* be provided to examinees who successfully pass FCC radio license examinations but the Commission does not supply the form nor mandate its format. CSCE forms are developed by the VECs ...and all examiners universally recognize the examination credit afforded by these forms even though all are slightly different in wording and format. All VECs file amateur radio operator license applications electronically and the FCC never sees the original form since it is archived at the VECs office. It thus appears feasible that locally produced examination session forms could indeed be used by the VEC System."

"It might also be appropriate for the Commission to mandate that all forms used in the VEC program be the same as agreed upon by the majority of the licensing coordinators. For example, the Commission requires the VECs to collaborate on the development of a common question pool for use in examinations to insure that the questions appearing on the written examinations of all VECs are standardized."

"Another option that we believe should be considered is to permit the VECs ...to design their combined FCC Form 605 and Schedule "D" containing only information needed by the VEC and Universal Licensing System. This would permit an amateur ...to apply for an examination and license on a single piece of paper. For example, information pertaining to Special Temporary Authority, Amendment/Withdrawal of Applications, Waivers/Exceptions, references to corporations, trusts and partnerships (only individuals are licensed as amateurs), etc.), could be left off the VEC produced form." (END QUOTE.)

The various VECs met with the FCC at their annual conference a year ago on July 10, 1998. FCC's Ira Keltz, the project manager for the Universal Licensing System, gave a status report on the coming implementation of ULS at this meeting.

As recorded in the meeting minutes, the NCVEC offered to make a small committee available to the FCC to help smooth ULS transition and voice VEC concerns. The FCC gladly accepted the offer, but never followed through. FCC's D'wana Terry, Chief of the FCC's Private Wireless Division discussed the restructuring of the Amateur Service and said the Commissioners are still working on the proposal. She invited the VECs to periodically present their concerns to her.

FCC meeting Washington, DC with VECs

On October 21, 1998, which coincidentally was also the release date of the *Report and Order* of the ULS rule-making, your author (Fred Maia/W5YI) and Win Guin, W2GLJ - both Co-Chairmen of the *National Conference of VECs* - traveled to the FCC's, Washington, DC headquarters. One of our concerns was the coming implementation of the Universal Licensing System. The meeting was attended by key people from the Private Wireless Division and Ira Keltz from the ULS Task Force.

One of the items discussed was (again from the meeting minutes which were filed with the FCC Secretary since the VECs felt this amounted to an ex parte presentation involving two major rulemakings) ULS implementation and restructuring of the Amateur Service): (QUOTE):

"The VECs should work very close with the Commission's Universal Licensing System. No one from ULS has contacted the VECs regarding an implementation schedule - or their needs or concerns."

"It is very important that all amendments to Amateur Service license classes, qualifying examinations and the Morse code waiver system be adopted and implemented prior to developing Universal Licensing System processes for the Amateur Service. This will eliminate having to again modify ULS to coincide with these changes." (END QUOTE)

Ira Keltz told us that the VECs would indeed be able to prepare their own information collection forms for their electronic filing needs as we had requested. This authorization is embodied in the new Part 1.913(f) Rules contained in the ULS order. (We reported this to the ARRL/-VEC when we returned from our Washington, DC trip.)

§ 1.913 Application forms; electronic and manual filing.

"(f) *Applications for Amateur licenses.* Each candidate for an amateur radio operator license which requires the applicant to pass one or more examination elements must present the administering Volunteer Examiners (VE) with all information required by the rules prior to the examination. The VEs may collect the information required by these rules in any manner of their choosing, including creating their own forms. ..."

In January 1999 the VECs still had not heard anything about either the approaching ULS implementation or Amateur Service restructuring, both of which are critical to the operation of the VEC System. A letter from the VECs was written on January 22, 1999 to FCC Chairman, William Kennard (with copies to the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Private Wireless Division and Policy and Rules Branch.) It said in part: (QUOTE)

"On August 10th (1998), the Commission released a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC 98-183 entitled "*Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's Amateur Service Rules.*" ...

"The purpose of this letter is not to discuss the merits or outcome of this proceeding, but to address the timing of your

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deliberations and decision and why it is important to the Amateur Service. ...

"As of 1984, all written examination questions appearing in the various amateur radio operator examinations are updated by the Volunteer Examiner Coordinators. ...

"Ordinarily, the question pool scheduled for revision is worked on by the VECs Question Pool Committee (QPC) between July (right after our mid-year conference with the FCC in Gettysburg) and December. This work is conducted by the QPC at no cost to the Commission or the taxpayer. It previously was a function of the FCC. ..."

"The scheduled revision of the Advanced Class questions was not completed last year. It was decided by the VECs Question Pool Committee last summer to place a moratorium on the question revision process until the VECs knew which amateur license classes (and question pools) would remain after the Commission acted on WT 98-143."

"Our examination revision and implementation schedule is very carefully timed to take the needs of the amateur community, the volunteer examiners, the publishers and the classroom instructors into consideration. The VEC's next annual conference with the FCC's Private Wireless Division is scheduled for July 8 and 9, 1999 in Gettysburg, PA."

"It would be appreciated if the Commission could make a final ruling on WT 98-143 prior to that date so that it may be discussed and action taken by the VECs to once again resume our question pool review and examination implementation schedule."

"Thank you for your consideration."

That letter was never acknowledged nor answered. The VECs contacted the Private Wireless Division to determine if the letter was received and receipt was confirmed. The VEC's thus assumed that action would be taken as requested. When no action was taken on WT 98-143, the VECs indefinitely postponed their conference.

VECs get conflicting instructions

Without prior consultation with the VECs, on April 23rd, the FCC released a *Public Notice* asking amateurs to register. It mentioned that "...any application filed by the Volunteer-Examiner Coordinator (VEC) on your behalf will be dismissed" unless the applicant had pre-registered. Registration is the process by which an applicant identifies them self to ULS and receives a "Licensee ID" which may be used in place of their SSN. **But that procedure was never the VEC's understanding.**

Instead, the VECs were told that registration was required if an applicant did not wish to give the VE team their Social Security number on an application form. This was later confirmed in a set of "*VEC Data Instructions for Filing Amateur Applications*" that was received from the ULS Task Force on May 25, 1999. It said (on page 4):

"If an applicant does not want to provide a social security number to the VEC, the applicant is responsible for registering with ULS prior to this filing in order to be assigned a Licensee ID." (END QUOTE)

This position was also confirmed in updated instructions received by the VECs on July 2 and 8. On July 3, however, the VECs received notification that:

"Automatic registration of TIN of applicants in the batch file is being considered, however, will not be available for implementation on 8/2. Once this is available for the batch file, applicants will not need to be pre-registered."

This caused the VECs to be very concerned since it had been their belief that pre-registration was only required if an applicant did not wish to indicate their SSN on an application form. The July 8th instructions confused the VECs even more. The ULS rules provide for the previous form to be used for a period of six months. The W5YI-VEC had already advised their 600 VE teams to have the applicant include their SSN at the top of the FCC Form 610 effective July 15th.

Our understanding now (from the ULS Task Force) is that the current Amateur Service database will not be converted to the ULS format until August 16 and that the last time that the FCC can receive batch files (VEC electronically filed applications) is August 8. We were further advised that the automatic registration procedure would be in place and registration would only be required if the applicant did not wish to provide their SSN to the VE.

VECs agree on new NCVEC Form 605

The VECs have now agreed to use an internally created single sheet application form they call the "NCVEC Form 605." It contains all the information needed to be collected by the new ULS and VEC System. It was designed to be very similar to the current FCC Form 610 to minimize confusion caused by the transition from the Form 610 to the new information collection requirements. We are enclosing a copy of this NCVEC Form 605.

A drawback to this new form is that it may have to be revised again once the FCC makes a decision on Amateur Service restructuring. And the forthcoming restructuring could cause the VECs and ULS to once again undergo expensive and time consuming computer programming and to revise their NCVEC Form 605. The VECs still feel that restructuring should have taken place before ULS was implemented, but they were not consulted.

The NCVEC Form 605 is to be used to renew Amateur licenses or in connection with the examination process carried out by volunteer examiners. It will also be used once the FCC assigns *Club Coordinators* to establish or renew amateur club or military recreation licenses and to renew RACES licenses. It is important to know that this is an **internal** VEC form and **can not be sent to the FCC**. The form can only be used in conjunction with applications filed electronically by a VEC. The "NCVEC Form 605" MUST be presented to a VE or forwarded to a VEC for handling. The FCC will still accept the manual filing of paper documents but you must use their version of the Form 605 and the Schedule "D".

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GREAT BRITAIN IMPLEMENTS 5 WPM HAM LICENSE

Republic of South Africa looks like it could be next!

The British Radiocommunications Agency, the FCC of the United Kingdom, has released a press notice stating that their new "Full A/B" Amateur Radio Class will take effect as of August 2nd. The "Full A/B" license class allows UK amateurs to operate on all HF frequencies authorized to their Amateur Service with a 100 watt power level (400 watts is authorized on the VHF and higher frequencies.) Code requirement is 5 words-per-minute. You get to radiate 400 watts on HF if you pass 12 wpm. [Press notice sent to us by Tony Smith, G4FAI]:

RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS AGENCY

New King's Beam House
22 Upper Ground
London SE1 9SA

General Enquiry Point & Switchboard
0171-211 0211 Telex 261969 RASQ3 G

PRESS NOTICE

P/99/618

15 July 1999

NEW AMATEUR RADIO LICENCE CLASS LAUNCHED

The Radiocommunications Agency announced today that a new class of amateur radio licence will be launched from 2 August 1999. The Agency announced last month that the new Class A/B Licence was being introduced as part of the long term re-structuring of the Amateur Radio Licence. This new category allows access to the High Frequency (HF) amateur radio bands, which are popular for worldwide communication, with a reduced Morse test speed of five words per minute.

It is envisaged that the international requirement for a Morse test will be removed following discussions at the 2002/2003 World Radio Conference. The introduction of the Class A/B Licence is an interim measure in preparation for moving towards a more incentive based licensing system. Discussions on protection of Morse are continuing with the *Radio Society of Great Britain*, the national representative organisation for radio amateurs in the UK, and further changes to the licence are under consideration.

The new licence class will be available from 2 August 1999 but reservations for call signs in the "M5 + 3 letter" series will be accepted by Subscription Services Ltd from today. Reservations will be dealt with on a strictly "first come first served" basis and a complete application must be received for a reservation to be made. Reservations are normally only accepted where the call sign is expected to be issued within the next six months. For this new licence class, reservations will initially be accepted for M5AAB to M5AZZ.

Notes for Editors

1 There are two types of Amateur Radio Licence, the Full and the Novice. Applicants for a full licence must have passed the Radio Amateurs' Examination while applicants for a Novice licence must have completed a practical training course and have passed the Novice Radio Amateurs' Examination. Novices are allocated segments of the bands allocated to full licence holders and operate at reduced power levels.

2 There are currently two classes of licence, A and B. Class

A licence holders have passed a Morse test (12 words per minute for the full licence and 5 words per minute for the Novice licence) and can operate on all allocated bands. Class B licence holders are restricted to bands above 30 MHz.

3 The new A/B Licence is a full licence which will allow access to all amateur bands, with a reduced power level on the HF bands.

4 Amateur and CB Radio Licences are administered on our behalf by Subscription Services Ltd. They can be contacted at the following address: Radio Licensing Centre PO Box 885 Bristol BS99 5LG - (Tel: 0117 925 8333)

5 These changes will be authorised by a Gazette Notice to be published in the London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes. A minor change to the licence has also been made in light of modifications to the advice given by the National Radiological Protection Board.

General Enquiries: 0171 211 0158

■ In related news, Ian Paperdorf, ZR5ABR of Durban, South Africa writes that the *South African Radio League* (SARL) has formally requested that SATRA (the *South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority*) reduce their present 12 words per minute Morse Code speed requirement to 5 words per minute. SARL is the national Amateur Radio society in South Africa.

■ Michelle Swann (KE4EZI) of Warner Robins, GA - a 17-year-old amateur radio operator involved in emergency service communications, has been named the 1999 "Newsline Young Ham of the Year" (YHOTY), according to Award Administrator Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF. The award is jointly sponsored by Newsline, Yaesu USA and CQ Magazine.

As "Young Ham of the Year," Michelle Swann, KE4EZI, will receive - courtesy of Yaesu USA - an expense-paid trip to the 1998 Huntsville Hamfest, along with a gift of Yaesu ham radio equipment. CQ magazine will treat Michelle to an expense-paid week in Space-camp Huntsville.

Michelle Swann is the eldest daughter of Mark (KR4YH), and Jean (KE4GRO) Swann. Her sister Tiffany is also licensed (KF4DGT). She was selected as this year's YHOTY recipient based on her six-year ham radio career that has been dedicated almost exclusively to public service work, including support communications during the 1994 Georgia floods and last year's Atlanta tornadoes.

A recent graduate of Houston County (Georgia) High School, Michelle has been accepted to some of the nation's top engineering schools, including the Georgia Institute of Technology, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the California Institute of Technology and Stanford University. She has chosen to enroll at the California Institute of Technology and will begin classes this September. One of her possible long-term goals is to become an astronaut.

The 1999 Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award will be presented on Aug. 21 at the Huntsville Hamfest.

SECTION 1 - TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

SECTION 2 - TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL ADMINISTERING VEs

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FOR VE/VEC USE ONLY - Page 1

SECTION 3 - TO BE COMPLETED BY PHYSICIAN**Physician's Certification of Disability**

PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATION OF DISABILITY Please see note below	PRINT, TYPE OR STAMP PHYSICIAN'S NAME
	STREET ADDRESS
	CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE
	OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER ()

I CERTIFY THAT I have read the Notice to Physician Certifying to a Disability, and that the person applying for the license is severely handicapped, the duration of which will extend for more than 365 days beyond this date. Because of this severe handicap, the person is unable to pass a 13 or 20 word per minute telegraphy examination. I am licensed to practice in the United States or its Territories as a doctor of medicine (M.D.) or a doctor of osteopathy (D.O.). I have considered the accommodations that could be made for this person's disability and have determined that, even with accommodations, this person would be unable to pass a 13 or 20 words per minute telegraphy examination.

WILLFUL FALSE STATEMENT IS PUNISHABLE BY FINE AND IMPRISONMENT (U.S. CODE TITLE 18, SECTION 1001)

PHYSICIAN'S SIGNATURE (DO NOT PRINT, TYPE OR STAMP) M.D. or D.O. DATE SIGNED

PATIENT'S RELEASE

Authorization is hereby given to the physician named above, who participated in my care, to release to the Federal Communications Commission any medical information deemed necessary to process my application for an amateur operator/primary station license.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE (DO NOT PRINT, TYPE OR STAMP) DATE SIGNED

NOTICE TO PHYSICIAN CERTIFYING TO A DISABILITY

You are being asked by a person who has already passed a 5 words per minute telegraphy examination to certify that, because of a severe handicap, he/she is unable to pass a 13 or 20 words per minute telegraphy examination. If you sign the certification, the person will be exempt from the examination. Before you sign the certification, please consider the following:

THE REASON FOR THE EXAMINATION - Telegraphy is a method of electrical communication that the Amateur Radio Service community strongly desires to preserve. We support their objective by authorizing additional operating privileges to amateur operators who increase their skill to 13 or 20 words per minute. Normally, to attain these levels of skill, intense practice is required. Annually, thousands of amateur operators prove by passing examinations that they have acquired the skill. These examinations are prepared and administered by amateur operators in the local community who volunteer their time and effort.

THE EXAMINATION PROCEDURE - The volunteer examiners (VEs) send a short message in the Morse code. The examinee must decipher a series of audible dots and dashes into 43 different alphabetic, numeric, and punctuation characters used in the message. Usually a fill-in-the-blanks format is used. With your certification, they will give the person credit for passing the examination, even though they do not administer it.

MUST A PERSON WITH A HANDICAP SEEK EXEMPTION? - No handicapped person is required to request exemption from the higher speed telegraphy examinations, nor is anyone denied the opportunity to take the examinations because of a handicap. There is available to all otherwise qualified persons, handicapped or not, the Technician Class operator license that does not require passing a telegraphy examination. Because of international regulations, however, any handicapped applicant requesting exemption from the 13 or 20 words per minute examination must have passed the 5 words per minute examination.

ACCOMMODATING A HANDICAPPED PERSON - Many handicapped persons accept and benefit from the personal challenge of passing the examination in spite of their hardships. For handicapped persons without an exemption who have difficulty in proving that they can decipher messages sent in the Morse code, the VEs make exceptionally accommodative arrangements. They will adjust the tone in frequency and volume to suit the examinee. They will administer the examination at a place convenient and comfortable to the examinee, even at bedside. For a deaf person, they will send the dots and dashes to a vibrating surface or flashing light. They will write the examinee's dictation. Where warranted, they will pause in sending the message after each sentence, each phrase, each word, or each character to allow the examinee additional time to absorb and interpret what was sent. They will even allow the examinee to send the message, rather than receive it.

YOUR DECISION - The VEs rely upon you to make the necessary medical determination for them using your professional judgement. You are being asked to decide if the person's handicap is so severe that he/she cannot pass the examination even when the VEs employ their accommodative procedures. The impairment, moreover, will last more than one year. This procedure is not intended to exempt a person who simply wants to avoid expending the effort necessary to acquire greater skill in telegraphy. The person requesting that you sign the certification will give you names and addresses of VEs and other amateur operators in your community who can provide you with more information on this matter.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS - If you decide to execute the certification, you should complete and sign the Physician's Certification of Disability on the person's Form 605. You must be an M.D. or D.O. licensed to practice in the United States or its Territories. The person must sign a release permitting disclosure to the FCC of the medical information pertaining to the disability.

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CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY

■ **Electronic Stamps is in the process of being rolled out nationwide!** - Partnering with a Stamps.Com, Inc and E-Stamp Corp., the U.S. Postal Service has a new *Information Based Indicia Program* (IBIP) service it calls PC Postage. (See: <<http://www.usps.gov/ibip/>>)

IBI can be applied from a personal computer which means enhanced convenience for customers. With the ability to print postage from a personal computer, customers have 24 hour seven days a week access to postage.

PC Postage is primarily aimed at the millions of small businesses and home offices that are too small for postage meters and too large for postage stamps. Customers simply purchase first-class, priority and express mail postage online in advance using a credit card and download it as needed.

It allows customers to buy postage over the Internet and print professionally looking metered mail "stamps" directly on to envelopes and mailing labels complete with postmark and bar code. You can even send high-volume mailings from within your PC's address book.

There are similarities between the two systems. Both charge a fee equal to about ten percent over the cost of the postage. And both use "Windows-based" software.

"E-Stamp" - a privately held company in San Mateo, CA - requires the purchase of hardware, a small device that plugs into the back of a computer. (See: <<http://www.e-stamp.com/>>) The security device is a 2"x2" connector known as an electronic vault. An advantage is that the electronic vault lets you store postage on your PC so you can print stamps offline.

"Stamps.com" is an entirely software-based application - no hardware is needed at all. You do, however, need to be connected to the Internet when applying postage.

Users simply access the Stamps.Com postage server which is designed to interact with word processing to print electronic postage onto envelopes using an ordinary laser or inkjet printer.

There is an online demo of the system at <www.stamps.com>. The site has the look and feel of the U.S. Postal Service - but Stamps.com is actually a private corporation headquartered in Santa Monica, CA which is regulated by the USPS.

Stamps.Com went public on June 25, 1999 at \$11.00 and raised more than \$60 million. It quickly quadrupled to more than \$45 a share, but has since backed down a little. Stamps.com trades on the NASDAQ under the symbol STMP.

Both firms are also in the process of making electronic metered stamps widely available through various outlets such as America Online, Office Depot and Quick-en.com. You'll be hearing a lot about it.

EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS

■ **It does not look good for Iridium, the global 66 LEO satellite telecom.** Their woes have included slow growth, high debt and technical problems. They have now slashed their handset and airtime prices up to 65% and have a new marketing plan. But prices are still too high (\$1,000 for the handset and \$1.50 - \$3.00 a minute for airtime.) Its stock is trading at 15% of its 52-week high and the firm may be forced into bankruptcy. Iridium has until August 11th to meet its customer and revenue goals.

COMPUTER INFO

■ **The World Bank said in a report that most poor and developing countries are not prepared for Y2K computer problems.** Only 15 percent of 139 developing countries are taking steps to correct the "date problem."

The lack of preparation is the most serious in Africa, Asia and the former Soviet Union. The World Bank has lent \$30 million to Argentina and \$29 million to Sri Lanka to deal with the Y2K problem.

The World Bank said predictions vary from electrical outages to financial instability to civil disorder. "Maritime shipping, air transportation, oil supplies and other sectors of world trade could be disrupted." Estimates for fixing the problem run as high as \$600 billion worldwide!

INTERNET NEWS

■ **On June 28th, the FCC launched a new Internet home page** - complete with a photograph of their new home at The Portals in southwest Washington, DC. It is also easier to navigate and features improved graphics and updated information. The FCC's website (www.fcc.gov)

has been enormously popular since its inception in 1996. The first month the site logged 19,000 "hits" per day. In May of 1999, the page logged 400,000 "hits" per day. The new homepage is its first complete redesign. Among the most obvious improvements to the homepage is a scrolling headline bar at the top featuring current FCC initiatives. The new site is a work in progress and the FCC is eager to hear from users with suggested improvements. <<http://www.fcc.gov>>

■ **A study from the FCC's Office of Plans and Policy (OPP) has concluded that the Internet has prospered** because the Federal Communications Commission has kept their regulatory hands off of it. The working paper recommends that the FCC continue the policy of minimum regulations in the future. Regulations, such as those developed for old technologies, should not be established on the Internet. And the OPP said the FCC should review old services with the idea that they too should be deregulated. The Working Paper represents the views of individual staffers and are not those of the commission.

WASHINGTON WHISPERS

■ **President Clinton has nominated Susan Ness for a second term at the Federal Communications Commission.** Ness was first nominated by Clinton and confirmed by the Senate on May 19, 1994, to serve as one of five FCC commissioners. She has been the agency's senior commissioner since November 1997. Ness represented U.S. interests at both the 1995 and 1997 *World Radiocommunication Conferences* of the ITU. She also played an important role in the FCC's implementation of the *Telecommunications Act of 1996*. The Senate still needs to confirm her nomination.

■ **The FCC has issued several citations based on consumer complaints** that companies are sending unsolicited junk fax advertising messages to their machines. This is a violation of the *Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991*.

The citations place each company on notice that subsequent violations may result in fines of up to \$11,000 per violation. The FCC said that they have handled over a thousand such complaints so far this year. (July 16th News Release)

■ **Newsweek reports that President Clinton has approved the use of com-**

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puter hackers to "destabilize" Yugoslav's Slobodan Milosevic. The objective is to attack his foreign bank accounts and to launch a campaign to erode his public support. Congressional intelligence committee members were told of the decision. Some questioned the legality and wisdom of taking such a risky action that could alienate other NATO members.

AMATEUR RADIO

■ **The FCC has fined a CB operator William Flippo (also known as Rabbit Ears) of Jupiter, Florida \$20,000.** He is charged with unlicensed operation on the ten meter ham band (specifically 28.375 MHz), willful and malicious interference to ongoing Amateur Radio communications and refusing to allow an FCC inspection of his radio station on June 8th. He had been previously warned. The FCC had received many complaints of intentional interference from Jupiter area amateurs over the past two years.

The bust was a result of close cooperation between the Amateur community and the FCC's Tampa field office. Local hams provided the Commission with audio tapes and their results of close-in monitoring and direction finding.

FCC agents from the Tampa District Office used direction-finding techniques to determine that intentional interference to amateur traffic "was occurring and that the intentional interference was being transmitted from the residence of William Flippo." Flippo has 30 days to pay the \$20,000 or to respond to the charges.

■ **Joseph A. Keller, W8WW of Lake Worth FL has collected five club call signs including:** W3VKS County Club, W4EPO Extra Amateur Radio Society, KG4ABE Bunghole Amateur Radio Fraternity, KF4ZXP Hams for Spam Amateur Radio Club and W1GAS Flatus Amateur Radio Team. FCC's Riley Hollingsworth wants further information on these clubs and says "We intend to cancel all of the listed call signs if you have not satisfactorily responded to this letter within 30 days...."

■ **Steve Massey, N6TT (Manhattan Beach, CA) has relinquished nine club call signs but asked to retain (without the required justification) K6KEY and K6NNN.** In addition, Massey has applied for an additional club call, K6AG. Massey was again asked to furnish the club organizational documentation required by Rule 97.(b)(2)... "If that information is not

supplied, those call signs will be canceled as well," Hollingsworth said.

■ **Motoaki Uotome, W9BO (Honolulu, HI) has relinquished some 40 club call signs but asked to retain W3AN which has been granted.**

The FCC has canceled the licenses of Jaime K. Sanchez II, W6RSD, Lowell Howard, KF8CO and Salvatore Santos KF2VD because they failed to show up to retake their license examinations as ordered on April 27, 1999.

■ **Rafael Huertas, N3ZUT** of Ponce, PR, **Gilbert Otero KC2DUL** of New York City and **Jose Perez Triana, Jr. WP3BW** of Miramar San Juan, PR have been ordered to retake all license examinations through the General Class at the FCC Offices in Puerto Rico and New York.

■ **Asterio W. Marrero, AA2RF** was ordered to retake all examinations up to the Extra Class at the FCC office in New York City by September 15, 1999.

■ **An unnamed Cozad, Nebraska amateur has had his Tech Plus upgrade to the General Class** "dismissed as defective" since the doctor who originally certified his "severe handicap" has now indicated "...that with accommodative procedures you may be able to pass the 13 word code exam."

■ **Louis G. Riggs, W5CSA (Rector, AR)** was sent an official warning letter that "you or someone using your call sign have operated radio transmitting equipment on the 75 meter Amateur band. These frequencies are not licensed to you under your Technician Plus license."

■ **The modification of David Castle's (WA9KJL, Evansville, TN) license to preclude HF operation** for a two year period has been withdrawn by the FCC. Castle has submitted evidence that his transmissions were interfered with by another Amateur radio operator attempting to call the 'Liberty Net' into session on 3950 kHz. "We will also be in further communication with the Amateur licensee acting as 'net control' on the evening of May 1, 1999, during the incident which led to this action," Hollingsworth said.

Following through, **Victor A. Misek, W1WCR of Hudson, NH** was advised that "Monitoring on May 1, 1999, showed that your station, and members of the group for which you were acting as [Liberty Net] 'net control' began transmitting on top of existing Amateur communications that were already in progress..."

"The URL site of your group appears

to advertise to Shortwave Listeners and to appropriate 3950 kHz for your use. We are again reminding you that all Amateur frequencies are shared equally among licensees of appropriate license classes, and that Rule 97.113 specifically prohibits broadcasting."

■ **It still appears that Switzerland will be ending all Morse code examinations as a prerequisite for HF Amateur Radio operation.** The USKA (Union Schweizerischer Kurzwellen-Amateure) is national ham radio society in Switzerland.

One of their directors, HB9RSO, Claude Georges, wrote a 3-page article about the Morse examination and other issues in the latest (July August 1999) issue of the USKA journal "Old Man." We received a translation and it appears Switzerland will abolish the CW test faster than planned originally. It is to be replaced by some EMI (electro-magnetic interference) questions. Claude is quoted as saying that this is absolutely necessary.

In February 1999 the USKA delegates had decided to promote these changes and there was to be a member vote. But that has now been changed to a "consultative survey" with the USKA Directors not bound by the findings.

The Swiss Telecom Agency has already advised that they would support the plan to replace CW with interference questions. Claude HB9RSO also wrote that the EMI issues are much more important today than the ability to decode CW by ear.

We sent another e-mail to the Swiss OFCOM (Federal office for communications) and again received an answer from Rudolf Rieder, head of the radio licenses section. He said that the issue has been discussed but nothing has been decided and will not be until after meetings with USKA in November.

Strangely, he also sent a copy of my e-mail to him and his return response to <claud.georges@swisscom.com> - the same USKA Director who wrote the July/August article in the Swiss ham journal.

Apparently there is a close relationship between USKA and OFCOM and they want to keep their intentions internal and on a very low international level to avoid any problems with other countries or the ITU. If Switzerland does abolish all Morse testing as a prerequisite for HF operation, it will be the first country to do so.

■ **VHF group files to protect weak signal - Petition seeks to bring FCC**

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back into ham band planning business.

The Central States VHF Society of Kerrville, Texas has filed a petition seeking a change in the Section 97.305 rules to protect narrow band signals (including CW, phone, and image) from interference caused by wideband data modes on certain spectrum in the 6-meter, 2-meter, 1 1/4-meter and 70-cm ham bands. Basically the petition wants to segregate narrow band from wide band operation. It has been assigned R-M 9673 by the FCC.

Specifically, Central States proposes rule changes that will eliminate wide band modes from 50.1 to 50.3, 144.1 to 144.3, 222.0 to 222.15, and 431.8 to 432.5 MHz. "The Central States VHF Society has long been concerned about the increasing encroachment into the so-called weak-signal portions of the bands above 50 MHz by wider-bandwidth modes, such as voice FM and occasionally packet also," said CSVHFS Government Liaison Committee Chairman Bill Tynan, W3XO. "All the Society is trying to do is to codify current practice into regulations so that nobody is confused."

The weak signal operators say that stations that use FM or high speed data transmissions normally do not have the large antennas and sensitive receivers required to tell if their transmissions are interfering with narrow band modes. They add that wide-band users have a distinct tendency to develop private conversation channels or frequencies they always operate, and then to view those channels as their own private frequency preserve. The narrow-band operators say these frequencies fall in or near "the agreed upon" weak signal voluntary sub-bands.

Weak signal operators believe that FM voice and other wide band modes of operations do not fit in or near spectrum reserved for weak-signal D-X'ing. Central States VHF Society says that voluntary band plans "...have not proven adequately successful in limiting these wide band modes from the band segments used for weak signal communication." Now they are asking to have these sub-bands protected by federal law.

Tynan compared the petition's goals to the current regulatory situation on 10 meters, where FM is prohibited below 29 MHz. "I think you could see how bad it would sound on 20 meters if people decided they wanted to run FM because it sounded so good," he said. Problems resulting from wideband interference with narrowband - or weak signal - modes such as CW or SSB are occurring more often, Tynan said, "especially in the larger

cities."

Tynan said there was no intention to ban packet and APRS from the 2 meter band. He admitted an "...an error committed by me in the appendix in terms of not putting down all the modes that are listed in the rules." Tynan said the mistake will be corrected when CSVHFS files its own comments on the petition by month's end.

Amateurs opposing the petition say that the weak signal community is relatively small and that new regulations "should not be at the expense of a much larger number of licensed Amateur Radio operators who are working within the rules. ..."

Preliminary comments are due at the FCC on the petition by July 28.

■ IT'S TAPS FOR U.S. TELEGRAPH - LAST DOTS DASHED OUT

is the headline of a July 13th Reuters news dispatch.

"SAN FRANCISCO - It's finally taps for U.S. ship-to-shore telegraph, drowned out by the high-speed chattering of satellite communications, high frequency radios and e-mail.

Globe Wireless, an 89-year-old California communications company, on Monday sent out what it billed as the last commercial maritime Morse Code message from North America, a terse sign-off that repeated the first words transmitted by the telegraph's inventor, Samuel F.B. Morse, 155 years ago: "What hath God wrought?"

The message, sent from Globe Wireless' KFS Marine station at Half Moon Bay south of San Francisco, marked a muffled end to the U.S. tradition of commercial radiotelegraphy, famous for the dots and dashes of Morse Code, company official Tim Gorman said Tuesday.

"The satellite started coming in in the early 1980s, and there were great advances in voice radio and radio telex," Gorman told Reuters. "But there was nothing over all those years that could replace Morse Code for its simplicity and reliability."

Globe Wireless gathered several old-time telegraph operators for a small ceremony marking the event, the gleaming telegraph key now surrounded by banks of computers and video screens used for more modern forms of communications.

"It's a sad event for me, but I know it's for the best," said Dalton Bergstedt, 92, a one-time manager of the Half Moon Bay facility. "It will improve maritime communications (to be) much better than

they ever were."

Morse Code and the radio telegraph are currently used only by smaller ships from developing countries, as well as certain Russian and Chinese vessels, Gorman said.

The Globe Wireless station at Half Moon Bay, as well as other former commercial radio telegraph facilities already taken off line, will now be used for the company's new communications product -- Globe Email, company officials said.

Gorman said that before the final sign-off, KFS Marine did relay one last telegram from the National Liberty Ship Memorial, the SS Jeremiah O'Brien, in San Francisco Bay to President Clinton in the White House.

"The message was 95 words, and it took me 6 or 8 minutes to copy it," said Gorman, who took down the Morse Code message from the ship. "Then I just transmitted it to the White House via e-mail."

■ **CQ Editor Alan M. Dorhoffer, K2EEK, SK** - (Hicksville, New York) -- Alan M. Dorhoffer, K2EEK, Editor of CQ magazine for nearly a quarter-century, died July 19 from complications of cancer surgery. He was 61. Dorhoffer was born on February 23, 1938, and spent his entire professional life at CQ, starting as an Assistant Editor in 1964, and becoming the magazine's 10th Editor in 1976. He was also a co-owner of the magazine since 1979.

Dorhoffer lived in Port Washington, New York, and was a ham since his teenage years, concentrating his activity on his favorite band, 10 meters. At CQ, Alan tried to focus on the "people" aspect of amateur radio. "Ham radio is people interacting with other people," he wrote in the magazine's 50th anniversary issue, and on the things people do with amateur radio. "The act of doing, whether it's contests or awards, that's been my outlook."

CQ Publisher Dick Ross, K2MGA, said Alan had been like a brother to him for over 42 years. "We'd butt heads from time to time on editorial matters, but that in no way diminished our mutual love and respect," Ross said, adding, "He was always there for everybody."

Alan's illness was diagnosed only a week or so before he succumbed to it. Alan was not married at the time of his death, and had no children; but he is survived by an "extended family" of over 1,000,000 close friends, the world's amateur radio operators. Funeral arrangements have not yet been finalized.

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HOW VANITY CALL SIGNS GOT THEIR START

"Vanity Call Signs"- amateur station call signs selected by the user - are a fact of life now. Here is a copy of the petition - filed by a Texas radioamateur - that started it all off nine years ago.

29 June, 1990

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of Amendment of FCC
Public Notice dated April 19, 1990
Concerning Assignment of Amateur
Radio Call Signs.

In these times of a tight Federal Budget the President's administration is promoting user fees to help decrease budget pressures. I propose that the FCC amend the PUBLIC NOTICE dated April 19, 1990 and allow the assignment of unused dormant call signs for the user fee of \$35.00.

This is the same amount charged by the FCC for commercial license changes. These call signs are dormant in computer databases and are doing no one any good.

Many Radio Amateurs would be glad to pay a fee to change call signs. This change would hurt no one in the Amateur Community and only affect those who apply for a call sign change and are eligible.

Applicants should be allowed to specify three (3) choices in order of preference and attach a \$35.00 fee to the Form 610 requesting a call sign change. No changes would be required in the present Form 610.

The FCC, the Federal Budget, and the Amateur Community all gain from this proposal. It is a Win/Win situation; therefore I respectfully request that the FCC adopt this new policy.

It must be noted that 13 years ago, an Amateur who was otherwise qualified could request a personal call sign at no charge. Please do whatever is necessary to effect this change as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Jim G. Wills, N5HCT
Extra Class Amateur Radio Operator
2101 Clubview Dr., Tyler, Texas, 75701.

The FCC eventually turned Jim down but he was persistent. He started working with Congress.

18 October, 1990

Senator Lloyd Bentsen
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Senator Bentson:

I am trying to convince the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to adopt the attached policy and generate revenue for the United States Treasury.

As you can see I sent the Proposal to them on the 29 of June, 1990. I also sent the proposal to you, as Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, to the Chairman of the House Finance Committee, and to the President.

To date not one of you have even bothered to respond. I watch the congress on C-Span trying to figure ways to increase revenues. I am offering a revenue generator to the government, but no one will listen.

Why is it so hard to get the FCC and our representatives

to respond to this timely suggestion of mine that will raise additional funds? Will you please help?

The recommendation is a voluntary revenue generator, something new for Washington, but no one will give me any support. Will you HELP?

Granted this request may appear to be vanity motivated, but why turn down good money because the commission claims their workload is too great. Everyone in Washington says that, but it doesn't convince the folks at home.

The congress exempted amateur radio from any fee requirement, but that was for normal licensing. This request is asking for something out of the ordinary for which many users will pay a fee. Isn't that the name of the game these days?

Sincerely

Jim Wills
2101 Clubview Dr.
Tyler, Texas 75701

That started a lengthy succession of letters including the following.

August 13, 1992

Congressman Robert K. Dornan
301 Canon Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Dornan:

Of all the representatives and Senators from Texas that I have written concerning the attached request, only Congressman Ralph Hall has tried to help. Congressman Hall isn't even of our party, yet he is trying to improve government's response to its people in this case.

What I are trying to do is convince the FCC to re-establish a procedure that was in effect until about 13 years ago, but with an added twist: I want to pay for this service. I have been unable to get the FCC to even consider my proposal.

The proposal is: That the FCC reissue, upon request, old amateur radio call signs that are now dormant due to death or non-renewal of the previous holders. For this extra service, we in the amateur community that apply would pay a user fee. Isn't that reasonable?

Our government often fails to respond to the needs of its people. This is another classic case. We are trying to pay for a special service that was once free, but the FCC won't respond favorably.

Will you please join Edward Markey and Ralph Hall by putting your weight behind the request that they have made of the FCC on behalf of many of us within the Amateur Radio Service? (see attachment #1.)

Thank you for your support. We do wish you well. If only we could elect 450 more like you we wouldn't be thinking about term limitations.

Sincerely,

Jim Wills
Amateur Radio Station N5HCT
2101 Clubview Dr.
Tyler, Texas 75701-4819

When Congress added the provision for "Vanity" Amateur station call signs to an appropriations bill, everyone was surprised - including the FCC and the ARRL!